Bexley to be removed - but not soon

By Mike McNees

Bexley Hall, the old apartment building-turned-dormitory across Massachusetts Avenue from Building 7, might be a casualty of the Institute's building plans within a few years.

The building, which was converted for dorm use by the Institute in the mid-1960s, will be removed from under graduate housing system and probably destroyed if or when MIT has the housing capacity to allow removal, according to plans developed by the MIT administration.

Although the Institute has always considered Bexley "temporary housing" and plans for phasing it out of the system are not new, these plans have taken on a new significance with the construction of a new dormitory on West Campus near MacGregor House.

That dorm, which is scheduled to be completed in September, 1975, will house 300 students, and will help relieve MIT's present housing crunch as well as some of the strain off the housing system. But even with the new dorm, Bexley apparently will still be needed by MIT, and so will survive longer.

"If several factors remain as they are at present," said Vice- President Kenneth Wadleigh, "we will need at least 250 beds beyond the capacity of the new dorm to meet the housing demand sufficiently that we can phase out Bexley." Producing those 250 beds, Wadleigh said, would require construction of another dorm — construction that is being studied, but not planned for the near future.

Factors that must remain constant, Wadleigh said, include present class sizes, return rates of upperclass students in the dorms, fraternity capacities, and housing policy. Of those, the housing policy is most likely to change, Wadleigh said.

"We've had tremendous battles in the last two years over the class size, and the Dean's Office (which administers the housing system) has won," Wadleigh said. "But the whole question of whether we want to keep the policy is open to question."

When Bexley is removed from the system, it will almost certainly be destroyed. "That building is in tough shape," Wadleigh said. "There's little we could do by way of renovating it, like we did Burton or Ashdown."

The MIT Planning Office has considered a number of possible uses for the site, but nothing concrete has been settled, Wadleigh said.

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